

realized the dramatic increase in infants' exposure to mercury. Many families realized that their child became autistic after receiving vaccines, but they had nowhere to turn. Doctors discounted the possible connection because they were not informed until late 1999 of this thimerosal/mercury exposure in vaccines. Many of these families were not aware that the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program existed until well after their three year statute of limitations had expired. The Department of Health and Human Services acknowledges that their media campaigns on this program were inadequate. In fact it has been the advent of the Internet and online autism and vaccine injury discussion groups that first informed most of these families of this program.

We must work quickly this year to first repeal the provisions of the Homeland Security Act that cut off families' legal options and second to pass legislation that will improve the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program for these families and for all individuals who face an injury from a covered vaccine. There is over 1.3 billion dollars in the trust fund. It is wrong that families have to fight for five, seven, even ten years to be compensated. It was not supposed to be a fight or a long process. The over-zealous government lawyers and program managers have lost sight of what this program is about. The Compensation program was supposed to be compassionate and non-litigious. When it was a close call, the program was supposed to rule in favor of the injured. Instead, the government goes to battle on many of the close cases and challenges the special masters when they lose. Oftentimes, when the Special Master rules in favor of the injured, Justice Department lawyers and HHS program managers call it a "bad decision by the Special Master." They see this as litigation and not compensation and because of that mindset, in many instances; it has become exactly what Congress was trying to avoid—a difficult, litigious, drawn-out process.

Mr. Speaker, in November I wrote the President and asked him to host a White House Conference on Autism to address many of these issues. Today the families of vaccine-injured children are in Washington to protest the loss of their legal options as a result of the Homeland Security Act provisions. I hope that my colleagues will take the time to listen to these families—their constituents—as they come around to their offices this week. Many of my colleagues are already members of the Autism Caucus and will be actively working on autism issues this year. Every member of Congress needs to pay attention to this issue. Autism and vaccine issues are not partisan issues. I am pleased that in the last congressional session we set aside partisanship and focused on the issues. I hope that as we bring legislation through committees and to the floor for votes, that I can count on all of your support to put the families first, to do the right thing, and pass effective, compassionate legislation. I am introducing legislation today to repeal the provisions in the Homeland Security Act and I hope to have all of your cooperation in getting this done quickly. These families deserve justice and the opportunity to seek compensation.

REGARDING THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION PROVIDING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2003 FOR THE DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES

HON. RALPH REGULA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to provide appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies for fiscal year 2003.

Mr. Speaker, this is an appropriations bill that truly touches every life in our nation—from funding our children's education, to research on countless diseases to job training funding to improve our nation's workforce and thus our competitiveness in the world economy.

The bill I am introducing today provides \$130,902,000,000 for the discretionary programs and activities within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies. It is the same funding level as the President's budget request and \$3.3 billion over the fiscal year 2002 level.

The challenging demands of funding the important programs in this bill have required us to seek a very delicate balance in crafting the legislation. Therefore, I would like to share with my colleagues some of the programs we have focused our attention on in structuring this bill.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

First in the area of our nation's health, we are providing \$26.6 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and increase of \$3.357 billion over last year. This funding level brings us very close to our final investment in our five year commitment to double the NIH biomedical research budget. Research efforts to date have resulted in great progress in understanding, preventing and treating disease and I am pleased to support these efforts.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is our nation's first line of defense in bioterrorism preparedness. The agency is also our nation's leader in promoting health and wellness as well as disease prevention. It is critical that we support the CDC's efforts in these areas, and we therefore provide \$4.3 billion for fiscal 2003 to carry out these functions.

The Health Resources and Services Administration programs provide the vital backbone for carrying out health programs across the nation. We provide \$1.457 billion for Community Health Centers, the access points for healthcare for our nation's uninsured and underinsured. This is a \$115 million increase over last year's level. At this new level, we anticipate that nearly 13 million people will receive these important services.

The Health Professions account in this bill has a long tradition of support by the Members of this House, and I am pleased to report that the bill continues this longstanding tradition. We have included \$377.6 million for the numerous health professions accounts. Included in this number is additional funding for nursing education, as our nation is now experiencing a critical nursing shortage.

Two further health programs of importance to many Members in this body include funding for the Ryan White CARE Act, at \$1.93 billion and Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education at \$292 million.

LIHEAP, the program that provides heating and cooling assistance to the poor will receive \$1.7 billion in regular formula grant funding, the same level as last year. All of the funding is provided to the states for distribution to families and individuals rather than diverting a portion to emergencies as requested, as \$300 million for emergency funding remains available for this purpose.

Other human services programs we focus priority funding on include the Safe and Stable Family program that we fund at \$70 million. To support those young people who are no longer of eligible age to receive foster care, we are providing \$40 million for Independent Living Vouchers. Finally, for the Compassion Capital Fund we are providing \$30 million and for abstinence education we are providing \$60 million, bringing the total for discretionary program initiatives to \$200 million.

EDUCATION

Turning to education, Mr. Speaker, this appropriations bill provides the funding for implementing our nation's new elementary and secondary education law, the No Child Left Behind Act. Since the enactment of this important law a year ago, much attention has been devoted to the need to fund this law, giving states and local education agencies the necessary resources to comply with the act.

The bill I am introducing today provides the important resources to assist teachers, school administrators, parents and students to achieve the goals of this new law. Funding for the numerous programs included in the No Child Left Behind Act totals \$22.3 billion. This figure includes increases in the following areas: \$500 million for the Title I program; \$100 million for teacher quality, \$100 million for the new Reading First program and \$87.5 million for Math and Science Partnerships. Also of substantial importance, Special Education is increased by \$500 million over last year.

Mr. Speaker, to some in the education arena this funding level may not be sufficient. However, I would like to take the opportunity to remind my colleagues that education is not exclusively about dollars. Historically, we have watched federal funding for Title I and other programs increase while test scores either remained stagnant or have actually declined. Hence, in the No Child Left Behind Act we seek results. Results in student achievement, results in accountability. How can we best accomplish these goals? I believe we can achieve these goals by ensuring that every year, every child has a good teacher in his or her classroom. It is for this reason that I continue to dedicate attention and resources to teacher quality in this bill.

Pell Grants continue to receive pressure for funding, as large numbers of people of returned to higher education as a result of our economic downturn. These new students seek additional skills to improve their position in our job market and in our global economy. In the bill we retain the maximum level for the Pell Grant set last year at \$4000, providing \$11.2 billion to fund the program. At this level nearly 4.5 million students are expected to receive this aid.

Head Start is an important program that serves our nation's poor and is being called

upon to more fully prepare our nation's children for school. We are providing \$6.667 billion for this program. At this funding level, we anticipate that program may serve 915,000 children.

LABOR

Keeping in mind our nation's current economic situation, the bill focuses increases within the Department of Labor account on dislocated workers, providing an additional \$113 million above fiscal year 2002. With this increase, local workforce development boards will receive a total of \$1.4 billion for re-employment assistance to these dislocated workers.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, the numbers before us represent our best efforts at crafting this bill. It focuses our priorities on protecting our nation against bioterrorism, providing assistance to dislocated workers and investing in our future by funding important education programs. The numbers are subject to change as we proceed to work both here in the House and together with the other body to produce a final bill.

AN ARIZONA PUBLIC POWER
UTILITY TURNS 100

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I call attention today to an Arizona institution that has risen from dusty frontier beginnings to become one of the nation's most successful public power companies. On Feb. 7, 2003, the Salt River River Project, generally known as SRP, will mark the centennial of its incorporation the oldest multi-purpose reclamation project in the nation.

On rivers east and north of Phoenix, SRP maintains a system of six large dams and reservoirs essential to maintaining central Arizona's economy. The company also operates a generation and transmission system that provides electricity to more than 60 percent of businesses, industries and residents of the greater Phoenix metropolitan area.

One could say much of SRP's one hundred-year history—how it began when pioneering settlers mortgaged their farms and lands for a federal loan to build Theodore Roosevelt Dam on the Salt River; how SRP paved the way for expanded water storage projects to quench central Arizona's thirst; how SRP got into the power business; and how it grew from hydro-power provider to Arizona's copper mines to the third largest public power utility in the U.S.

While these are noteworthy achievements, SRP deserves further note for the community-minded spirit and it has continued to show since the days when a partnership between small desert farm communities led to the building of Roosevelt Dam.

Many times in recent years the company's employees have been recognized locally and nationally for their spirit of volunteerism and generosity. They have led in fundraising for the United Way and have contributed time to many good causes, including litter clean-ups, school mentoring, environmental teaching, meal service at homeless shelters, Special Olympic programs, summer camps for youths—the list is long.

In short, one could say that the community partnerships that led to SRP's formation a

century ago have instilled in the company an ongoing commitment to community service. And, while SRP in virtually every respect must operate by the same competitive standards as private industry, it has not forgotten the meaning of the word "public" as a public power and water provider.

Mr. Speaker, I wish SRP a bright future of continuing good service in the year of its centennial.

HONORING ALBERTSONS

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize and congratulate Albertsons Corporation for receiving the State Chairman Award from the Employer Support for Guard and Reserve.

Who puts their lives on the line for us? Who provides the combat ready forces that will help protect our national security interests? With the support of their employers, members of the National Guard and Reserve are there when we need them.

The National Guard and Reserve provide half of our nation's uniformed military forces. In fact, some military skills are found only in the Reserve components. The Secretary of Defense will call Reserve forces to serve along side their Active duty counterparts anytime the United States is conducting a significant military operation.

Now, more than ever, we as a nation are relying on our Reserve Members. Because they are Reserve and this is not their regular, full-time job, it is essential that employers support them. That's why I am so proud of Albertsons.

Albertsons has gone beyond the letter and the spirit of the law. After September 11th terrorist attacks, Albertsons implemented an enhanced military leave policy. Albertsons now provides wage differentials; continued health care coverage and retirement plan participation. Albertsons even set up a "hot line" to support impacted employees and their families. The company is a leader in reinforcing and enhancing its corporate policies in support of National Guard activities.

Because of this voluntary, proactive action that Albertsons took to assist our Reserve, they are receiving the State Chairman Award. This award is presented on behalf of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs in recognizing "outstanding" contributions in support of Reserve Forces made by individuals, organizations or employers. Each award signifies extraordinary endowments that materially affect the Reserves.

Albertsons deserves this award and I'm proud to acknowledge them for receiving it. Thank you, Albertsons, for supporting your country in such a patriotic manner.

THE SECOND AMENDMENT
PROTECTION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to restore the right the founding fathers saw as "the guar-

antee of every other right" by introducing the Second Amendment Protection Act. This legislation reverses the steady erosion of the right to keep and bear arms by repealing unconstitutional laws which allow power-hungry federal bureaucrats to restrict the rights of law-abiding gun owners.

Specifically, my legislation repeals the five-day waiting period and the "instant" background check, which enable the Federal Government to compile a database of every gun owner in America. My legislation also repeals the misnamed ban on "semi-automatic" weapons which bans entire class of firearms for no conceivable reason beside the desire of demagogic politicians to appear "tough on crime." Finally, my bill amends the Gun Control Act of 1968 by deleting the sporting purposes test, which allows the Treasury Secretary to infringe on second amendment rights by classifying a firearm (handgun, rifle, shotgun) as a "destructive device" simply because the Secretary believes the gun to be "non-sporting."

Thomas Jefferson said "The constitutions of most of our States assert that all power is inherent in the people; . . . that it is their right and duty to be at all times armed." Jefferson, and all of the Founders, would be horrified by the proliferation of unconstitutional legislation which prevent law-abiding Americans from exercising their "right and duty," to keep and bear arms. I hope my colleagues will join me in upholding the Founders' vision a free society by cosponsoring the Second Amendment Restoration Act.

A BILL TO REAUTHORIZE THE
UNITED STATES PEACE CORPS

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 8, 2003

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I ask permission to revise and extend my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure and the honor today of introducing a bill which will reauthorize the United States Peace Corps. I served in the Peace Corps for two years, from 1964–66, in Colombia and it inspired me to devote my life to public service. With this bill, over 14,000 Americans will be given the chance to have the same inspiration.

This bill is long in the making. We in Congress have been advocating the increase and strengthening of the Peace Corps for a long time. The goal of increasing the Peace Corps to 10,000 volunteers was announced by President Ronald Reagan in 1986. It was echoed by President Clinton in 1992. Finally, President George W. Bush announced in his State of Union address last year, his commitment to double the number of Peace Corps volunteers in five years. Last year, following the President's statement, I introduced a bill, which would help fulfill this vision for the Peace Corps. The same bill was introduced in the Senate, where it was ultimately passed by unanimous consent.

The bill I am introducing today is essentially the same bill that was passed by the Senate:

It doubles the number of volunteers in five years;

It restates the independence of the Peace Corps;